

We claim:

1. A method for applying toppings to baked goods comprising the steps of:
applying a starch-based solution onto a surface of the baked goods after baking to form a
5 treated surface; and
applying toppings onto the treated surface of the baked goods.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the starch-based solution is formed of a starchy substance and water in a ratio of between approximately 1:20 and 1:4.

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3. The method of claim 2 wherein the starchy substance is a pregelatinized wheat starch.

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4. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of applying the starch-based solution onto the surface of the baked goods including the steps of:

transporting the baked goods beneath spray nozzles, said spray nozzles located within a spray chamber and in communication with a source of the starch-based solution; and
spraying the solution onto a surface of the baked goods as the baked goods are moved proximal the spray nozzles.

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5. The method of claim 4, further including the steps of:
detecting the proximity of the baked goods to the spray nozzles; and
activating the spray nozzles responsive to a positive detection of the baked goods.

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6. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of applying toppings onto the treated surface of the baked goods includes the steps of:

transporting the baked goods beneath a topping applicator;
detecting the proximity of the baked goods to the topping applicator; and
activating the topping applicator responsive to a positive detection of the baked goods.

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7. An apparatus for applying dried toppings to baked goods of a type emerging from an oven along a conveyor belt, the apparatus comprising:

a source of starch-based solution;
a source of dry topping material;

a spray station having a spray chamber and a spray station conveyor passing through the spray chamber, the spray chamber including at least one nozzle coupled to the starch-based solution and arranged for spraying the solution toward the spray station conveyor, the spray station conveyor arranged for receiving baked goods from the conveyor belt and moving the
5 baked goods through the spray chamber; and

a topping station having a dry topping dispenser and a dispenser conveyor in communication with the spray station conveyor passing underneath the dispenser for applying dry topping material to a surface of the baked goods.

10 8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said starch-based solution is formed of a starchy substance and water in a ratio of between approximately 1:20 and 1:4.

9. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the starchy substance is a pregelatinized wheat starch.

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10. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said spray station conveyor operates at a slower speed than the conveyor belt so that the baked goods are grouped closer together on the spray station conveyor than they are on the conveyor belt.

20 11. The apparatus of claim 7, further including a first detector arranged upstream of the spray station for detecting the proximity of baked goods to the spray station and for activating the spray station nozzle responsive to a positive detection.

25 12. The apparatus of claim 7, further including a second detector arranged upstream of the topping station for detecting the proximity of baked goods to the topping station and for activating the dry topping dispenser responsive to a positive detection.

13. The apparatus of claim 7, the dry topping dispenser including a hopper and a filler in communication with the hopper for supplying the hopper with dry topping material.

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14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the filler includes a third detector arranged for detecting the amount of dry topping material within the hopper and transporting dry topping material from a topping reservoir responsive to a low amount signal.

15. An apparatus for transporting granulated material comprising:
an elongate hollow wand having a proximal end and a distal end;
vibration means attached adjacent the proximal end of the wand for imparting
vibrational forces to the wand; and
5 vacuum means coupled to the proximal end of the wand for imparting a vacuum force at
the distal end of the wand and thereby drawing material adjacent the distal end of the rod up
through the rod to the proximal end.
- 10 16. The apparatus of claim 15, further including a flexible hose coupled at one end to
the proximal end of the wand to communicate the granulated material drawn up through the
wand to an opposing end of the flexible hose.
- 15 17. The apparatus of claim 15, further including a hole formed through a wall of the
wand to the hollow interior for communicated air into the wand.
- 20 18. The apparatus of claim 15, the distal end of the wand formed at an oblique angle.
19. The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the oblique angle is approximately 45
degrees.
- 25 20. A method for transporting granulated material out of a container, the method
comprising the steps of:
providing an wand having a wall defining an elongated hollow interior and a wand tip
located at a distal end of the hollow interior;
placing the distal end of the elongated hollow wand into the container containing the
granulated material such that the wand tip is located adjacent the granulated material;
applying a vibrational force to a wall of the wand and conducting the vibrational force
through the wand and to the granulated material; and
30 applying a vacuum force to the hollow interior of the wand and communicating the
vacuum force to the wand tip thereby pulling the granulated material adjacent the wand tip up
through the hollow interior to a proximal end of the wand.

21. The method of claim 20, further including the step of forming the wand tip at an
oblique angle to the wall of the wand.

22. The method of claim 21, further including the step of coupling a flexible hose to the proximal end of the wand.